Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.007	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
Issue Number:		Ratified By	Quality Director
Issue Date:	01.07.26	Service Type:	Schools
		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	Yes		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

- Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027)
- Safeguarding Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Mobile Phone Policy (EDU.POL.040) and Online Safety Policy (EDU.POL.009)
- Curriculum, SMSC and Fundamental British Values Policy (EDU.POL.008), and PSHE & RSHE Policy (EDE.POL.003)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Acorns School every pupil has the right to learn and grow in a safe place, free from bullying. Many of our pupils have experienced trauma, exclusion or instability, and bullying can deepen those wounds. We are committed to challenging bullying in all its forms and to building a culture of respect, empathy and inclusion.

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This policy sets out how we prevent bullying, how we respond when it happens, and how we support everyone involved. It is part of how we keep pupils safe and how we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, and visitors at Acorns School. It aims to:

- Prevent bullying and build a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Make sure everyone can recognise bullying and knows how to report it.
- Respond quickly, fairly and supportively when bullying happens.
- Support the pupil who has been bullied and help the pupil who has bullied to change their behaviour.
- Record, monitor and learn from bullying so our prevention keeps improving.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

Bullying. Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. It often involves a misuse of power. A one-off incident can also be serious and is dealt with under this policy.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical, for example hitting, kicking or taking belongings.
- Verbal, for example name-calling, insults or threats.
- Emotional or social, for example leaving someone out, humiliating them or spreading rumours.
- Prejudice-based, targeting race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or another characteristic.
- Cyberbullying, for example abuse, threats or exclusion through phones, messaging, social media, games or other online platforms.

Child-on-child abuse. Some bullying is also child-on-child abuse and is dealt with through our safeguarding procedures. This includes sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexualised language, the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, misogyny and other prejudice, and the creation or sharing of AI-generated or faked sexual images, sometimes called deepfakes.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles.

- Every pupil safe - No pupil should have to put up with bullying, and every report is taken seriously.
- Relational and trauma-informed - We understand behaviour as communication and respond in line with the Keys Connect model, using restorative approaches.

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- Address behaviour not labels - We are clear that bullying is wrong, while supporting the pupil who has bullied to understand the harm and change, rather than labelling the child.
- Positive norms - We use language that does not normalise harmful behaviour or stigmatise any group, and we model the respect we expect.
- Partnership - We work with pupils, families and other agencies to keep pupils safe.

5.2 Anti-Bullying in Practice

Preventing bullying

- We build a culture of respect, inclusion and positive relationships.
- We teach empathy, difference and online safety through PSHE, relationships education and tutor time.
- We identify and supervise the times and places where bullying is more likely.
- We encourage pupils and staff to speak out, and we act when they do.

Recognising bullying

Staff stay alert to possible signs of bullying, for example a pupil becoming withdrawn or anxious, a change in mood or behaviour, unexplained injuries, a drop in attendance or progress, self-harm, or a pupil starting to bully others. Signs can be subtle in pupils with complex needs, so staff notice and ask.

Reporting bullying

Pupils can report bullying to any trusted adult, and we provide safe and accessible ways to report, including confidential reporting channels and, where appropriate, anonymous reporting mechanisms. We make sure pupils know how to report and that they will be listened to.

Responding to bullying

- We take every report seriously and act quickly.
- We support the pupil who has been bullied with reassurance and practical help
- We address the behaviour of the pupil who has bullied through restorative conversations and, where needed, proportionate consequences.
- We keep in contact with parents and carers, and we follow up to check the bullying has stopped.

Support and consequences

Consequences are proportionate and aim to change behaviour. They may include restorative meetings, loss of privileges, increased supervision and parental involvement, and as a last resort suspension in line with the Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027). We also provide support to both pupils, and we make a safeguarding referral or seek multi-agency help where it is needed.

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Cyberbullying and online bullying

We treat bullying through phones and online with the same seriousness as any other bullying. We work with pupils and families to prevent it, respond to it, and keep evidence. Staff conduct relating to mobile phones and pupils' use of devices is addressed within the Mobile Phone and Online Safety policies (EDU.POL.009).

Bullying off-site and online

Bullying that happens away from school, including online and on the way to and from school, is treated with the same seriousness. We investigate and take appropriate action so far as is reasonable, and we work with parents, carers and other agencies where needed.

Bullying as a safeguarding concern

Where bullying raises a safeguarding concern, including any child-on-child abuse, staff report it to the designated safeguarding lead immediately. It is recorded on CPOMS, risk assessments are reviewed, and we follow our Safeguarding Policy (EDE.POL.002). Child-on-child abuse is never dismissed as banter or part of growing up.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS, and the reporting form, restorative template and parent letter are held in Arbor. Leaders analyse bullying data, including by pupil group such as pupils with SEND, to spot trends and target prevention, and report to the proprietor and governors.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Acorns School this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We robustly challenge prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to any protected characteristic, and we monitor whether any group is more affected so we can act. Anti-bullying is one of the clearest ways we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

Bullying incidents involving protected characteristics will be recorded and analysed separately to identify patterns, trends and required actions.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Treat others with respect, speak out if they see or experience bullying, and support one another.

6.2 Staff

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Model respect, stay alert to the signs of bullying, act on every concern promptly, record incidents, and support both the pupil who has been bullied and the pupil who has bullied.

6.3 Leadership and the designated safeguarding lead

Leadership at Acorns School makes sure this policy works in practice, that staff are trained, and that bullying data is analysed and acted on. The designated safeguarding lead leads on any bullying that is also a safeguarding concern.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors at Acorns School hold the school to account for an effective anti-bullying strategy and review the impact of this policy.

6.5 Parents and carers

Tell the school if they are worried about bullying, and work with the school to resolve it.

6.6 Named leads

Whole School DSL

The designated safeguarding lead at Acorns School is Paula Tankard.

Deputy DSL's for each site also include:

Acorns School Marple - Carrie-Anne Harrison.

Acorns School Ashley - Ellie Coot.

7. Training Requirements

All staff at Acorns School are trained in recognising and responding to bullying, in trauma-informed and restorative practice, and in child-on-child abuse, with annual refreshers. Training is updated in response to emerging issues, for example cyberbullying, misogyny and AI-generated images.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

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- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, standard 10, which requires an effective strategy to prevent bullying so far as reasonably practicable.
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025, and 2026 from 1 September 2026), including child-on-child abuse.
- The Equality Act 2010, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to protected characteristics.
- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the power to regulate pupils' conduct beyond the school gate.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- The Online Safety Act 2023, relevant to online bullying and harms.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found on RADAR. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

Paula Tankard is the Named DSL for Acorns School.

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At Acorns School Marple the following local arrangements apply:

- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Carrie-Anne Harrison and Miranda Rathmell, Headteacher, and Simone Stopford, Assistant Headteacher
- Local authority safeguarding team and other key contacts:
- Multi Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASHH) - 0161 474 4734
- Pupils can report bullying directly to any member of staff. They may prefer to speak to a trusted adult, for example their class teacher or teaching assistant, or our pastoral lead. However, a pupil may choose to disclose bullying to any member of staff. Staff have a duty to pass this information to Simone Stopford, our Assistant Headteacher, or Carrie-Anne Harrison, our DSL. If a pupil wishes to report bullying anonymously, they can put a message in our 'What I Want My Teacher to Know Boxes'.
- Our school values of ready, respectful, safe and our PSHE curriculum builds a respectful culture. Our School Council meets termly and provides peer support and action around issues of bullying.

At Acorns School Ashley, the following local arrangements apply:

- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ellie Coot, Naomi Mitchell, and Sarah Booth.
- Local authority safeguarding team and other key contacts: TELEPHONE NUMBER: Schools Safeguarding Adviser Cheshire East: 01606 288934 childrenssafeguarding@cheshireeast.gcsx.gov.uk Emergency: Cheshire East: 01606 288934 0300 123 5022 – Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)
- How pupils report bullying at this school, including any anonymous route: Pupils are encouraged to talk to any member of staff or staff who they choose to speak to. We keep open communication with the parents of our pupils so that if a pupil speaks about anything at home, parents feel comfortable in speaking to us.
- Local enrichment or peer support that builds a respectful culture: All pupils take part in regular PHSE lessons, and this covers topics such as healthy relationships and bullying. Regular enrichment activities and class-based activities allow pupils to complete group activities, where staff can support social interactions. Each day the school takes part in social time and a question of the day is discussed. All of these activities help pupils to build trusting relationships with their peers.

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